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The volunteering of older people - the cross European vision

Abstract

The volunteering is one of the very important human activities which depend on many factors. Social political cultural and economical activity influences the levels of volunteering in the countries. On the western economies the volunteering have gain the significance with increasing tendency to enlarge it in the future. This activity is seems to have particular importance for the older people. They usually have more time, most of them are retire and their volunteering work is, fundamental support for the many volunteering organization.

The objective of this paper is to characterize the older volunteers, identify types of volunteering activities they are enrolled and to explore the differences between the volunteerism in different European countries.

The data used on this paper belong to the wave four of integrated World Value Survey.

Key words: older people volunteering, type of volunteering, volunteers' characteristics.

Introduction

Each time more and more individuals are engage in voluntary activities. Only in Europe this number rounds about 100 million, and makes a difference to our society. The voluntary activity is an important part of democratic life in Europe. There is a many definitions concerning we may consider that wherever people engage together in

activities to help each other, support those in need, preserve our environment, campaign for human rights, or to initiate actions to help ensure that everyone enjoys a decent life - both society as a whole and the individual volunteers benefit and social cohesion is significantly strengthened.

Volunteers are engaged in a diverse range of activities, such as the provision of education and services, mutual aid or 'self-help', advocacy, campaigning, management, community and environmental action. They played the important role on social inclusion and integration and finding solutions to societal issues improving quantity and quality of services and creatively develop new services. Volunteering may help create of innovative partnerships between businesses, public authorities and voluntary sector organizations.

The volunteering of older people plays a very important role for volunteers themselves. Evidence of the benefits that volunteering can bring older people continues to roll in. Many studies proved that volunteering improve physical and social functioning, "They report better well-being and greater life satisfaction. There's a reduced risk for mortality compared to non-volunteers." (Tang 2010). The same investigator reported that is some evidence that the requirements associates with volunteer's activity may reduce the risks of the cognitive decline.

There can be many reasons why an older person would choose to offer their services on a voluntary basis. For some, they simply like to be on the 'go' all the time and the thought of putting on their slippers and watching daytime TV all day would be detestable to them. Many times have lost a husband or wife and take great comfort in getting out into their local community where, not only does voluntary work take their mind off their own problems but it also enables them to feel a sense of how lucky they are to be able to help others less fortunate than themselves. It also allows them to socialise with other people and to avoid the social isolation that living alone can often bring.

As it was told the aim of this paper is to understand the factors which characterized the older volunteers. In this work we ran several logistic regressions where the explained variable is a dummy variable indicating whether the individual participated or not in volunteering activities. We aggregate the volunteering activities in four major types of volunteering and ran separate regressions for each one of the volunteering types.

Characteristics of volunteers – the literature review.

Our literature survey led us to choose as potential determinants of volunteering three groups of variables: socioeconomic variables (income, education,), demographic variables (gender, size of town, marital status) and attitudinal variables (level of satisfaction with life, level of choice and control, importance of religion). In addition, we introduce country dummy variables to control for the influence of country specific factors.

Some of those specific characteristics may influence the decision of doing the unpaid work. There are many studies which identify some attributes which derives from the *social-structural*, *personality*, and *identity of* individuals whose participate in many volunteering actions. Wilson (2000) concluded that there is considerable evidence showing that, gender, educational attainment, household income, and the breadth of an individual's social network are predictors of volunteering.

In the former studies level of education is the most consistent predictor of volunteering (McPherson & Rotolo 1996, Sundeen & Raskoff 1994). "Education boosts volunteering because it heightens awareness of problems, increases empathy, and builds self-confidence"(Brady et al 1995, Rosenthal et al 1998). Educated people have opportunity to belong to more organizations were they develop more civic skills (example - how to run the meetings) (Herzog & Morgan 1993) and are also more likely to be asked to volunteer (Brady et al 1999). Other important indicator is the income level. Here we have many different findings. (Wolff et al 1993) assume that trough the opportunity costs that volunteer hours are inversely related to wages. Freeman (1997) finds a negative relation between wage income and volunteering but Menchik & Weisbrod (1987) indicate that work is positively related to income. Considering the marital status, married people are more likely to volunteer than single people, although single people without children volunteer the most hours (Sundeen 1990) Freeman (1997) and if one spouse volunteers, the chances are the other does also (Freeman 1997).In terms of gender, females are slightly more likely to volunteer than males, but in Europe there is no overall gender difference because females volunteer less than males in some countries and more than males in others (Gaskin1997, Smith 1997, Hodgkinson & Weitzman 1996, Hall et al 1998).

A number of recent studies, all using longitudinal data, show that volunteers subsequently enjoy better physical health in old age (Stephan 1991), score higher on measures of functional ability (Moen et al 1992) and, most striking of all, are at lower risk of mortality (Musick et al 1999, Oman et al 1999, Rogers 1996, Sabin 1993). However, causal effects and selection effects can be mutually reinforcing as well as mutually exclusive. Volunteering improves health, but it is also most likely that healthier people are more likely to volunteer.

Recent scientific work has established both a theoretical basis and strong empirical evidence for a causal impact of social relationships on health. Prospective studies, which control for baseline health status, consistently show increased risk of death among persons with a low quantity, and sometimes low quality, of social relationships. Volunteering is a way for people to become integrated into their community, and it is well-established that social integration yields positive mental health effects (House et al 1988). Volunteering assumes an especially important role among the elderly because it can “inoculate, or protect, [them] ... from hazards of retirement, physical decline and inactivity” (Fischer & Schaffer 1993). The volunteering may prevent social isolation which is a major risk factor for mortality from widely varying causes. The mechanisms through which social relationships affect health and the factors that promote or inhibit the development and maintenance of social relationships remain to be explored.

Data

Our empirical study uses data from the integrated fourth wave of World Values Survey.

European Values Systems Study Group carried out the first EVS surveys in several Western European countries in 1981. The World Values Surveys series was started when the original EVS evoked the enormous interest over the world. It was replicated in 14 additional countries. EVS surveys have been carried out in three waves: 1981, 1990 and 1999/2000. WVS data have been collected in five waves: 1981-1984, 1990-1993, 1995-1997, 1999-2001, and 2005-2006.

For the objective of this study we used the 1999/2000 wave of EVS and 4th wave of WVS (1999-2001)

The international surveys of the World Values Survey (WVS) series looks a lot like to the Eurobarometers and the ISSP surveys. Citizen activities, attitudes, and basic values in different countries are studied with integrated, structured surveys.

European Values Study group is nowadays responsible for the EVS data collection. The planning of the WVS, and the coordination and documentation of both study series are carried out by the World Values Survey network, under the direction of Professor Ronald Inglehart.

There some differences considering the data collection of this survey. WVS data are usually collected with face-to-face interviews. However, in 1990, the Finnish material was collected via Gallup Channel, i.e. by using Internet terminals installed in respondents' homes.

We only consider only equal or more then 65 years old individuals.

The explanation model for older people volunteering

On this part of the paper we will present the model which explains the volunteering of the older people. We used the logistic regressions for general and particular types of volunteering. We used tree types of explanatory variables: socioeconomic variables (income, education), demographic variables (gender, size of town, marital status) and attitudinal variables (level of satisfaction with life, level of choice and control, importance of religion). Many of the variables were originally categorical variables. In order to incorporate categorical variables in the regression, one needs to choose a reference category and define dummy variables for each one of the remaining categories. The explanatory variables are described in Table 2.

This procedure is automatic in most statistical packages. For example, in SPSS, one just needs to indicate that the variable is categorical and automatically the program generates the dummy variables associated with each category except the reference one. In other words, if a categorical variable has k categories, one needs to define $k-1$ dummy variables. A dummy variable corresponding to a given category indicates whether the respondent belongs to that category or not. The exclusion of one of the categories is necessary to avoid problems of multicollinearity. Table indicates the

reference category as well as the name of the dummy variable associated with each category. It is worth mentioning that the interpretation of the coefficients associated with a dummy variable should always be done with respect to the excluded category.

This survey has questions considering different type of volunteering name unpaid work such us:

- Unpaid work social welfare service for elderly, handicapped or deprived people
- Unpaid work religious or church organization
- Unpaid work education, arts, music or cultural activities
- Unpaid work labour unions
- Unpaid work political parties or groups
- Unpaid work local political action groups
- Unpaid work human rights
- Unpaid work environment, conservation, animal rights
- Unpaid work professional associations
- Unpaid work youth work
- Unpaid work sports or recreation
- Unpaid work peace movement
- Unpaid work organization concerned with health

The dependent variable is “unpaid work 1” which join all other types of unpaid work in order to answer the question characteristics of individual whose declared to do the volunteering. The variable has the binary classification as “0” for the situation of non unpaid work and “1” for situation when the inquiry respondent does any unpaid work.

The questionnaire considers 13 types of unpaid work and it would be difficult to compare all of them. Thus we wonder if it is possible to divide these different types of volunteering according to some common characteristics. To answer this question we use principal component analysis. Using the oblimin rotation method with Kaiser Normalization and excluded cases listwise, we obtained 4 components (see Table nº 1)

Table n° 1 Results of the Principal Components Analysis

Types of unpaid work	components			
	1	2	3	4
Unpaid work religious or church organization	0,707			
Unpaid work social welfare service for elderly, handicapped or deprived people	0,603			
Unpaid work education, arts, music or cultural activities	0,446			
Unpaid work local political action groups	0,411			
Unpaid work labour unions		0,708		
Unpaid work political parties or groups		0,681		
Unpaid work professional associations		0,542		
Unpaid work environment, conservation, animal rights			0,707	
Unpaid work peace movement			0,679	
Unpaid work human rights	0,415		0,554	
Unpaid work youth work				0,684
Unpaid work organization concerned with health				0,633
Unpaid work sports or recreation				0,456

Source: EVS wave 4

Bartlett's test of sphericity indicates whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would indicate that variables are unrelated. We clearly reject the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is a statistic that indicates the proportion of variance in the variables that might be explained by underlying factors. The value of 0.785 indicates a good adequacy. Table n° 1 shows the correlations between the variables and the factors, with values less than 0.4 deleted.

The first component aggregates the following variables:

- Unpaid work religious or church organization
- Unpaid work social welfare service for elderly, handicapped or deprived people
- Unpaid work education, arts, music or cultural activities "
- Unpaid work local political action groups

This component captures unpaid activities related to "local volunteering". We created a binary variable with the same name, which takes the value 1 if the individual does at

least one type of unpaid work in this group, and takes the value 0 otherwise. People who participate in this type of activities are not likely to receive direct benefits but they are concerned with general and comprehensive social issues on local level. That is why we have chosen the name "local volunteering".

The second component aggregates the following variables:

- Unpaid work labour unions
- Unpaid work political parties or groups
- Unpaid work professional associations

This component captures activities that might be more related with personal interests and experiences. We called this component "professional and political volunteering" and defined a binary variable with the same name. This variable is equal to 1 if the individual did at least one type of unpaid work in this group and is equal to 0 otherwise.

The third component aggregates the following variables:

- Unpaid work environment, conservation, animal rights
- Unpaid work peace movement
- Unpaid work human rights

Like the first component, this kind of unpaid work is not likely to generate direct benefits for the volunteer. Since this work is related with concerns about the underprivileged/disadvantaged people we decided to call this component "global awareness volunteering" and created another binary variable with the same name. The value "1" represents situations where the individual does at least one type of unpaid work in this group and takes the value "0" otherwise.

The fourth component aggregates the following variables:

- Unpaid work youth work
- Unpaid work sports or recreation
- Unpaid work organization concerned with health

This component also captures activities that may benefit directly the volunteer, but more related with cultural and recreational activities. We called it "Health and leisure volunteering". We created a binary variable with the same name. This variable takes the value 1 when the individual participated in at least one type of volunteer work in this group and it is equal to 0 otherwise.

Considering the literature review variables below have been chosen. The SPSS program through the categorical command in logistic regression creates dummies variables for each category in equation.

Choose one category as the reference category. Each dummy variable represents one of the other categories. For each case, the dummy variable corresponding to that case's category equals 1, and the other dummy variables equal 0. (Cases belonging to the reference category have values of 0 for all dummy variables.)

Table 2: The variable description.

Explanat. variable	Description
Income	Categorical variable The reference category is "low income"
Inc_med	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has medium income level
Inc_high	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has high income level
Education;	Categorical variable. The reference category is "low education"
Edu_med	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has medium education level
Edu_high	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has high education level
Female	Dummy equal to 1 if individual is a female, equal to 0 if a male
Marital Status	Categorical variable. Reference category is "married" or liv. together as married
MS_dvr_sep	Dummy equal to 1 if individual is divorced or separated
MS_wid	Dummy equal to 1 if individual is widowed
MS_sng	Dummy equal to 1 if individual is single
Town small	Reference category is "small town" (<2000 inhabitants)
Town_medsm	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lives in "medium-small town" (2000-20000)
Town_medlrg	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lives in "medium-large town" (20000-100000)
Town_lrg	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lives in "large" (>100000 inhabitants).
Life Satisfaction;	Categorical variable Reference category is "unsatisfied"
Sat_med	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has medium level of satisfaction
Sat_high	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has high level of satisfaction
Choice & control	Level choice & control, considering life decision & situation. Ref. "low choice & control"
Cont_med	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has medium level of choice and control.
Cont_high	Dummy equal to 1 if individual has high level of choice and control.
Religion import.	Categorical variable. Reference category is "very important"
Rlig_rather	Dummy equal to 1 if individual considers religion "not very important"
Rlig_notsoim	Dummy equal to 1 if individual considers religion "rather important"
Rlig_unimpor	Dummy equal to 1 if individual considers religion "not important"

West_c	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lived in western country
East_c	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lived in western country
North_c	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lived in western country
South_c	Dummy equal to 1 if individual lived in western country

The logistic regression is a form of regression which is used when the dependent variable is a binary variable. In this case, our objective is to investigate the relationship between a set of explanatory variables and the occurrence of unpaid work. Let X be the set of explanatory variables and let Y be our dependent dummy variable which is equal to 1 if the respondent does unpaid activities. It is assumed that the probability of participating in volunteering activities depends on the set of explanatory variables as follows:

$$P(Y=1/X)=G(Z)=((exp(Z))/(1+exp(Z))),$$

where Z is given by:

$$Z= \beta_0+\beta_1Incmed+\beta_2Inchigh+\beta_3Edumed+\beta_4Eduhigh++\beta_5Female+$$

$$\beta_6Townmedsm+\beta_7Townmedlrg+ \beta_8Townlrg+\beta_9MSdvr+\beta_{10}MSsep+\beta_{11}MSwid+$$

$$\beta_{12}MSsng+ \beta_{13}Satmed+\beta_{14}Sathigh+\beta_{15}Contmed+\beta_{16}Conthigh+\beta_{17}Rligrather+$$

$$\beta_{18}Rlignotsoim+\beta_{19}Rligunimpor+ \beta_{20}West_c+ \beta_{21}East_c +\beta_{22}South_c +\beta_{23}North_c$$

Since G(Z) is a non-linear function, the impact of a change in the explanatory variable $x_{\{k\}}$ in the probability of volunteering is not equal to $\beta_{\{k\}}$. Let

$P(X)=P(Y=1/X)=G(Z)$, then the impact on $P(X)$ of an infinitesimal increase in variable $x_{\{k\}}$ is given by:

$$((\partial P)/(\partial x_{\{k\}}))=((dG)/(dZ))/((\partial Z)/(\partial x_{\{k\}}))=((\exp(Z))/([1+\exp(Z)]))[1-((\exp(Z))/([1+\exp(Z)]))]\beta_{\{k\}}$$

For dummy variables the impact of changing $x_{\{k\}}$ from 0 to 1 is given by the difference between G evaluated at $x_{\{k\}}=1$ and G evaluated at $x_{\{k\}}=0$, maintaining the values of the remaining variables. Notice that, in both cases, the sign of the impact is equal to the sign of the coefficient associated with the variable, $\beta_{\{k\}}$. However the magnitude of the impact depends on the value of Z, and thus depends on the value of all explanatory variables.

In terms of interpretation it is sometimes useful to look at the odds ratio. If individual i and j are identical except in the k characteristic, then

$$((P_{\{i\}})/(P_{\{j\}}))=\exp(\beta_{\{k\}}(x_{\{ik\}}-x_{\{jk\}})).$$

Moreover, if $x_{\{ik\}}-x_{\{jk\}}=1$, i.e. there is a unit change in $x_{\{k\}}$, then $P_{\{i\}}/P_{\{j\}}=\exp(\beta_{\{k\}})$. The exponentiated coefficient $\exp(\beta_{\{k\}})$ is called the odds ratio. Note that their interpretation is particularly useful for dummy variables. For a dummy variable, the odds ratio tells us that, controlling for the remaining explanatory variables, an individual having a given characteristic (dummy equal to 1) has a probability of engaging in volunteering activities which is $\exp(\beta_{\{k\}})$ times the probability of volunteering for an individual not having that characteristic (dummy equal to 0).

Table 3 presents the results of the logit regression. Overall the results show that the model has high explanatory power and that all categorical and scale variables are significant.

Table nº 3: Results of the Logistic regression considering the types of volunteering.

Variable	All volunt.	Local volunt.	Prof.&Pol Volunt	Global Volunt	Health&leis. Volunt.
Income	4,827*	8,646*	2,903	0,131	0,378
Inc_med	0,106	0,175*	0,300	-0,032	-0,004
Inc_high	0,261**	0,398***	0,276	-0,073	0,112
Education	97,623***	60,505***	27,310***	31,702***	21,568***
Edu_med	0,548***	0,520***	0,410**	1,192***	0,508***
Edu_high	1,081***	0,981***	1,075***	1,314***	0,827***
Female	-0,262***	-0,036	-1,126***	-0,274	-0,749***
Marital Status	4,010	2,731	4,608	10,161**	2,187

MS_dvr_sep	-0.373*	-0.370	-0,846	-0,042	-0,409
MS_wid	-0,150	-0,124	-0,779	0,707**	-0,018
MS_sng	-0,057	-0,029	-0,049	-0,446	-0,198
Town small	6,238	4,223*	0,485	3,097	0,640
Town_medsm	0,287**	0,1864	0,133	-0,066	0,269
Town_medlrg	0,159	-0,033	0,179	0,374	0,262
Town_lrg	0,146	0,004	0,124	0,104	0,228
Life Satisfaction;	52,012***	26,676***	16,091***	4,536	12,919***
Sat_med	0,333**	0,346*	0,144	0,617	0,407
Sat_high	0,863***	0,774***	0,822***	0,944*	0,882***
Choice & control	11,151***	4,737*	0,994	3,176	7,317**
Cont_med	0,470***	0,344**	0,183	0,821*	0,927***
Cont_high	0,375**	0,353*	0,035	0,873*	0,849**
Religion import.	74,871***	131,555***	2,851	14,560***	2,348
Rlig_rather	-0,518***	-0,617***	-0,318	-0,798***	-0,033
Rlig_notsoim	-0,756***	-1,199***	-0,145	-0,751***	0,041
Rlig_unimpor	-0,874***	-1,572***	-0,270	-0,723**	-0,283
East_c	-0,538***	-0,676***	0,331	-0,654*	-0,997***
North_c	0,597***	0,580***	0,729***	0,220	0,332
South_c	-0,547***	-0,580***	0,167	-0,577**	-0,819***
Constant	-2,134***	-2,317***	-4,062***	-5,114***	-4,061***
Hosmer &Lameshow test	Chi-sq 5,636 0,688	Chi-sq 11,306 0,185	Chi-sq. 6,249 0,619	Chi-sq 6,238 0,621	Chi-sq 5,270 0,728

Significance level: ***>0,01; **>0,5; *>0,1

The education variable is only statistically significant at the 1% level for general and for all types of volunteering, suggesting that they have a significant impact on the volunteering decision. Both medium and high education level individuals have higher probability of volunteering than low education individual and the value of the coefficient is larger for highly educated individuals. In fact, the relative probability of a high education individual older than 65 years, is 3,7 times ($e^{\{1,314\}}$) bigger for global volunteering or 2,9 times bigger ($e^{\{1,075\}}$) for professional and political volunteering. The relative probability of a low education individual volunteering whereas the corresponding figure for a medium education individual or example for global volunteering is 3,3. This suggests that the volunteering for general and all types of volunteering of older people is increasing with the level of education. The fact that individual with more education volunteer more ,even in older age, might be explained by the phenomenon called by Smith (1981) as "general activity syndrome" which means that "individual who engage in a form of socio-culturally valued behavior has tendency to engage in other types of socio-culturally valued behavior too. Education plays a central role to make individual incorporate the societal values and follow the societal norms in their behavior" Thus our results are consistent with previous findings in the

literature (Freeman, 1997; McPherson and Roltolo, 1996; Herzog and Morgan, 1993; Brady et al., 1999).

Regarding income our results show that both medium-income and high-income older than 65 individual have a higher probability of being involved in general and local volunteering than low-income individuals (the reference category). Moreover, since the coefficient associated with high-income is higher than the one associated with medium-income, our results suggest that the probability of participating in volunteering activities is increasing with income. These findings are consistent with the results obtained by Schady (2001) and Menchik and Weisbrod (1987).

Let us now analyze the demographic variables. The impact of gender is statistically significant at the 1% level in general volunteering professional and political volunteering and health and leisure volunteering. Our regression shows that the relative probability of a female volunteering of older individuals is 77-% considering the general volunteering, 32% considering the professional and political volunteering and 47% considering the Health and Leisure volunteering, of the relative probability of a male volunteering. This result contradicts previous findings by Gaskin and Smith (1997) and Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1996).

The size of the town is a statistically significant only in general volunteering and considering the medium small town in comparison with small town. It means that older individual who lives in small medium town have more probability to volunteering than individual who lives in a small town. In this parte we don't agree with Wuthnow (1989) findings on this issue.

Considering marital status our results reveal that separated, or divorced older individuals have lower probability of being volunteers than married individuals but widowed volunteered more in global volunteering than married. On the other hand, there does not exist a statistically significant difference between divorced, separated, single, widowed people and married people in their propensity to volunteer. On this issue we do not confirm the Sundeen (1990) and Freeman (1997).

The attitudinal characteristics have a significant influence on the probability of older people volunteering. A higher level of satisfaction with life is positively associated with participation in all types of volunteering activities. Similarly, individual who feel that they have a high level of choice and control over their lives also have a higher propensity to volunteer in general and in all types of volunteering expect Professional and Political one. These findings are consistent with House (1988) and Fischer and

Schaffer (1993) results. Finally, the effect of religion is positive. The higher the importance given to religion by the individual, the more likely he/she is to do volunteer work in general and local e global types of volunteering.

Our regression also included country dummy variables to control for group country specific effects. Recall that the reference group is Western European countries, thus we are comparing the intercept term for each group with respect to Western Europe group.

First, one can conclude that the older individuals from Eastern Countries are less likely to do unpaid work in general and in all types (except P&P) of volunteering work than individuals from western European countries,(the coefficients are all negative and statistically significant except for professional and political which is positive but not significant).

As it was mentioned before, there are some reasons for the small participation rate in post-socialist countries: the lack of tradition transmitted from generation to generation; the relative poverty, implying that more energy is spent in satisfying the basic needs; the low social sensitivity; and the perception about the capacity for social acting.(Gocko 2006).

In the Southern countries present the same pattern as Eastern Countries in comparison with Western European Countries. One reason for the low volunteering propensity for example in the Iberian countries is the relatively small associative activities due the 20th century dictatorships which limited all those activity except the ones which were controlled by the state.

The older individuals from Northern Countries have higher propensity to volunteer than older Western Europeans. The interesting finding is that those differences are statistically significant for general volunteering, local volunteering and professional and political volunteering but not in global volunteering and health and leisure volunteering. The strengthened European and Scandinavian model of social economy places expectations of voluntary social work in nonprofit organizations, church and church associations. According to the latest studies (Karjalainen and Saranpää, 2002), in Finland the large part of the work dealing with social problems of the citizens is covered with voluntary associations and activities.

To summarize, our results show significant differences across countries regarding the propensity to volunteer. These differences are linked with the socioeconomic, political and cultural environment in which the volunteering institutions function and which may

influence the volunteering activities. For example, compulsory voting and service requirements can be argued to influence civic activity and yet also question the voluntary nature of volunteering (Tuan, 2005). Different welfare models are connected to the societal needs and requirements for individual participation and the role of the third sector in each society. In general, policies regarding civil society differ to a great extent in the countries covered, and the effect of this in the voluntary activity is central.

Conclusions

In this work we investigated the factors that influence the decision of volunteering for older than 65 years people. We started by identifying the set of explanatory variables which have been considered in previous studies analyzing the decision to participate in volunteering activities. In our study we decided to include a set of socioeconomic variables, a set of demographic variables and a set of attitudinal variables. In addition, we included country dummy variables to control for the influence of group country-specific effects. Then we estimated logistic regressions first part we analyzed the determinants of volunteering in general, in the second part we identified four major types of volunteering and ran separate logistic regressions so as to understand the determinants of each type of volunteering.

Our results clearly indicate that the set of determinants of the propensity for volunteering is not the same for all types of volunteering. Moreover the sign and magnitude of the impacts of each explanatory variable varies according to the type of volunteering activity. For volunteering in general the most novel contribution of our study are the inclusion of attitudinal variables as determinant of volunteering and the study of the country effect.

Another new finding is the identification of type's of volunteering in which engage older volunteers. We identify the local volunteering, professional and political volunteering global volunteering and health and leisure volunteering.

We found out that level of satisfaction and level of choice e control are important characteristics for older volunteering for general volunteering and for almost all types of volunteering. The country effect is also very interesting. We confirm the higher propensity to volunteering of northern Countries e lower of Eastern and Southern Countries for almost all types of volunteering.

Our results indicate that determinants for engaging different types of volunteering changes. For instance, the income effect is only statistically important for general volunteering and for local volunteering.

Giving more importance to religion generally affects positively the propensity for volunteering, but in the case of professional and political and health and leisure volunteering the attitude towards religion seems to be irrelevant. Overall, these results suggest that it is important to study separately each type of volunteering as there are significant differences across the various types of volunteering.

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